

**SCUOLA SUPERIORE DELL'UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI UDINE
ESAME DI AMMISSIONE PER LA CLASSE UMANISTICA – LINGUA INGLESE
A.A. 2005-2006**

Read the attached text (“Stereotyping gender differences”) and do the following exercises:

Part A: Approaching the text

Exercise 1: *In this text there are 7 indented paragraphs. Match each thematic section below (1., 2., 3.) with the paragraph(s) which is/are conceptually related to it.*

*E.g. 1. Overview of the literature *(par. 6-7)*

DO NOT INSERT THE SAME PARAGRAPH TWICE!

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Overview of the literature | (par. _____) |
| 2. Trends in contemporary research | (par. _____) |
| 3. Conflict talk: reporting and rapping | (par. _____) |

Exercise 2: *Match each connective below with the function it performs within the text by filling the corresponding blank with either*

a (for Additive)

b (for Temporal)

c (for Causal)

or **d** (for Contrastive).

(PAY ATTENTION TO THE REFERENCE LINE IN BRACKETS AND WRITE ONLY ONE LETTER IN EACH BLANK)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Contrary to (l. 5) | _____ |
| 2. Because of (l. 9) | _____ |
| 3. For example (l. 15) | _____ |
| 4. On the other hand (l. 21) | _____ |
| 5. Therefore (l. 23) | _____ |
| 6. When (l. 35) | _____ |
| 7. When (second occurrence l. 40) | _____ |
| 8. While (l. 44) | _____ |

Part B: Intensive reading

Exercise 3: *Read the text carefully and tick () the appropriate answer(s):*

1. What is the overall function of the text?

to investigate cultural stereotypes about male and female talk

to classify cultural stereotypes about male and female talk

to break up cultural stereotypes about male and female talk

2. Choose another suitable title for this text:

Text and context: spoken discourse

Genderised talk: real and represented

Men and women in conversation: reporting and rapping

3. For whom is the text mainly intended?

specialists in the field

general readers

students

4. Justify your choice in question 3 by choosing **2 answers** among the following:

it takes specialised knowledge of the subject for granted

it refers the reader to various seminal studies in the field

it summarises the findings of various seminal studies in the field

it is taken from a coursebook

5. In the writer's opinion, the main reasons for the persistence of the stereotype of the talkative woman are (choose **2 answers** among the following):

the fact that male talk is seen as normal, while female talk is considered as deviant

the fact that women talk more than men in private situations

the fact that teachers encourage girls to talk more

the fact that the stereotype expresses a male point of view and it is men who, most of the time, are given a chance to express their views on the opposite sex in public situations

Exercise 4: *Making reference to the text, decide whether the following statements are TRUE (T), or FALSE (F), or INCOMPLETE (I) paraphrases of the information conveyed (N.B.: the various statements appear in the order in which the information is presented in the text):*

1. Cultural stereotypes are also dependent on language and gender
2. It has now been demonstrated scientifically that men speak more than women
3. Teachers are responsible for the fact that boys are more talkative than girls
4. Women are not as good at telling jokes as men
5. Men and women behave differently in conversation because of the different roles for which they are prepared in society
6. Women would like men to provide less information when they talk

7. Men concentrate on the information content while women focus on the context
()

Exercise 5: *The following is a list of synonyms for words which appear in the text in the indented paragraph indicated in brackets and in the order given on the list. Find the corresponding words and write them in, together with their respective line number:*

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| 1. explain (par. 1) | _____ | (line __) |
| 2. complaining (par. 1) | _____ | (line __) |
| 3. power (par. 2) | _____ | (line __) |
| 4. proof/indications/signs (par. 2) | _____ | (line __) |
| 5. suggested/put forward (par.3) | _____ | (line __) |
| 6. be at ease (par. 3) | _____ | (line __) |
| 7. expresses (par. 3) | _____ | (line __) |
| 8. come into conflict (par. 5) | _____ | (line __) |
| 9. criticisms (par. 6) | _____ | (line __) |
| 10. interesting details (par. 6) | _____ | (line __) |
| 11. pass on (par. 7) | _____ | (line __) |

Part C: Guided writing

Exercise 6: *Re-read the lines indicated in brackets and then complete the following paraphrases by choosing ONE word/expression for each missing item:*

- (ll. 12-16) Sadker and Sadker (may / should) be correct when they claim that the teacher (often is / is often) responsible for the fact that boys talk three times more than the girls.
- (ll. 25-28) When (analysing / analyse) stereotypes about male and female talk, one (shall / must) always consider (who's / whose) viewpoint is behind representations of spoken language.
- (ll. 42-46) Tannen (tells / says) that many male-female conversations result in difficulty because men think (to be / they are) simply exchanging information, while women think in terms of negotiating.

Exercise 7: *Complete the following extract adapted from Tannen's book "You Just Don't Understand" (London, Virago Press, 1991, pp. 75-77). The extract deals with 'Rapport-talk' versus 'Report-talk', the two key concepts briefly hinted at in the final paragraph (ll. 43-47) of the text you have been working on so far. Choose one answer for each item from the list below:*

[...] Who (1) more, women or men? Women are believed (2) too much. (3) study after study finds that it is men who talk more [...], the seemingly contradictory evidence is reconciled (4) the difference (5) what I call *public* and *private speaking*. More men feel comfortable doing "public speaking," (6) more women feel comfortable doing "private" speaking. Another way (7) capturing these differences is (8) using the terms *report-talk* and *rapport-talk*. For (9) women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport [...]. From childhood, girls (10) peers (11) try to stand out or appear (12) than others [...]. For [the majority of] men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in (13) hierarchical social order. This is done by exhibiting knowledge and skill, and by holding center stage through verbal performance (14) story-telling, joking, or

STEREOTYPING GENDER DIFFERENCES

Studies on language and gender have sought to cast light on people's real experiences of how men and women converse, both in single-sex and mixed-sex groups, in order to investigate the stereotypes we have in our culture — stereotypes like the trivial, chattering, nagging woman and the strong, silent, long-suffering man [...].

5 Contrary to the stereotype of the female as the 'overtalkative' sex who 'gossips' and 'talks a lot' (as reported by Kramer (1977) who surveyed attitudes in the USA), many studies have now been carried out in Britain and the USA which show that, in a variety of contexts, it is men who talk more. Obviously, age, status and context will affect the amount of talk a participant delivers and how much dominance s/he has. Because of the value of access to talk 10 for achievement in education, and because data is arguably easier to collect, many studies in this area have been carried out in educational contexts, and here boys have been shown to speak more than girls. A typical study by Sadker and Sadker (1985) of over a hundred classes in both arts and science subjects found boys talking on average three times more than the girls. One reason for this seems to be the role played by the teacher. There is evidence, for 15 example, that teachers pay more attention to boys, giving them both disapproval and more encouragement and praise.

Another reason for the stereotype of the talkative woman is advanced by Deborah Tannen in *You Just Don't Understand: Men and women in conversation*, where it is claimed that men are trained to become familiar with talking in *public* situations, learning how to hold centre 20 stage through verbal performance like storytelling, joking and imparting information. Women, on the other hand, are more comfortable with *private* speaking: for them, the language of conversation is more about establishing connections and negotiating relationships. Males might therefore *think* females talk a lot because they hear them talking in situations where men would not, for example on the telephone or in social situations with 25 friends. This means that the idea of the talkative woman may be a view which encodes male perceptions of how women behave in private, personal contexts. If, in contrast, women were able to express their perceptions of men in the workplace and other public situations, this view might well be of men as 'the overtalkative sex'.

Contemporary research on language and gender does not suggest that male talk is 'normal' 30 while female talk is 'deviant', nor does it indicate that there is anything intrinsically powerful or powerless about male and female talk, respectively.

What it does suggest is that men and women adopt different conversational *styles* because they are trained to understand and operate spoken discourse differently as a part of being

socialised for different roles in society. This approach sees male and female groups as
35 different cultures which, when they are brought together in mixed-sex situations, can clash
and cause misunderstandings because the participants are operating different rules.

[...] According to Tannen, one of the biggest complaints women have about men as
talkers is that they don't give enough information when they recount incidents — they leave
out all the 'juicy bits' of any story, giving just the bare bones; in contrast, men complain that
40 women give too much information when they tell stories — they go on and on when they
could really sum up the content of their discourse in one sentence.

Tannen's explanation of these complaints is that men and women think they are doing
different things when they relay information: men concentrate on the information content
alone (the 'message') because they see the recounting of incidents as reporting, while women
45 pay more attention to the 'metamessage' — recounting experiences is a way to relate to the
listener. Such an approach is termed rapporting.

From: Unit 5, pp. 292-297, in:
R. Carter *et al.*, *Working with Texts. A Core Book for Language Analysis*.
London, Routledge, 1997.